

WE CLAIM:

1. A brewing packet comprising:
a filter defining a cavity;
a brewing ingredient within the cavity; and
a machine-interpretable feature associated with the filter, wherein the feature includes encoded data regarding the brewing packet.
2. The packet of claim 1, wherein the machine-interpretable feature is located on the filter.
3. The packet of claim 1, wherein the filter defines an annular flange, the machine-interpretable feature being located on the annular flange.
4. The packet of claim 1, wherein the filter includes a first filter portion, a second filter portion, and a gasket which seals the first filter portion to the second filter portion.
5. The packet of claim 1, wherein the machine-interpretable feature is optically detectable.

6. The packet of claim 5, wherein the machine-interpretable feature includes one or more of a color, a shape, a glyph, a text string, a barcode, and a digital watermark.

7. The packet of claim 1, wherein the machine-interpretable feature is electromagnetically detectable.

8. The packet of claim 7, wherein the machine-interpretable feature includes a magnetic data storage medium.

9. The packet of claim 1, wherein the machine-interpretable feature is mechanically detectable.

10. The packet of claim 9, wherein the machine-interpretable feature includes one or more of notches, grooves, holes, bumps, and textures.

11. The packet of claim 1, wherein the encoded data includes at least one predefined brewing directive.

12. The packet of claim 11, wherein the predefined brewing directive is one or more of contact time, contact pattern, fluid quantity, fluid temperature, fluid pressure, or fluid pass-through rate.

13. The packet of claim 1, wherein the encoded data defines at least one characteristic of the brewing ingredient.

14. The packet of claim 13, wherein the characteristic is one or more of grind, blend, roast, quantity, bed depth, freshness, and expiration date.

15. A beverage producing device comprising:
a fluid path configured to direct fluid through an ingredient enveloping beverage packet into a beverage receptacle;
a sensor configured to detect encoded data stored on the beverage packet; and
a processor configured to interpret the encoded data and to direct production of a beverage according to the encoded data.

16. A method of automatically directing beverage-brewing comprising:
placing a brewing packet encoded with packet-characteristic data into a beverage-brewing device;
reading the packet-characteristic data;
interpreting the packet-characteristic data; and
directing beverage-brewing in accordance with interpreted packet-characteristic data.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein reading the packet-characteristic data includes detecting an optically recognizable feature containing the data.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein reading the packet-characteristic data includes detecting an electromagnetically recognizable feature containing the data.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein reading the packet-characteristic data includes detecting a mechanically recognizable feature containing the data.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein directing beverage-brewing includes setting at least one predefined brewing directive.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein directing beverage-brewing selectively includes aborting the brewing process.

22. A multiple beverage coffee-brewing packet comprising:

a first substantially rounded filter portion;

a second substantially rounded filter portion operatively connected to the first substantially rounded filter portion by an orbicular gasket to collectively define a cavity, the first and second substantially rounded filter portions being at least partially constructed of water-permeable material; and

a coffee-brewing ingredient within the cavity, wherein the coffee-brewing ingredient is proportioned to produce multiple servings of drip coffee.

23. The coffee-brewing packet of claim 22, wherein a coffee-brewing operation is directed by a machine interpretable feature associated with the coffee-brewing packet.

24. The coffee-brewing packet of claim 23, wherein the machine interpretable feature is the dimension of the orbicular gasket.

25. The coffee-brewing packet of claim 23, wherein the machine interpretable feature is a barcode located on the coffee-brewing packet.